

REMARKS

Summary of Amendments

1. Claims 1 through 4 were originally presented in this application. Claim 5 was added in a response to a first Office action on the merits, dated September 28, 2005.
2. No claims have been added or cancelled in this paper. Claims 1 and 5 have been amended, as described in more detail below, to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the inventive material of the instant invention. Claims 1 through 5 remaining pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,280,156 to Niori et al.

Claims 1-4 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,231,690 to Soma et al.

Claims 1 and 3 also stand rejected under U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,133,557 to Kawanabe et al.

Claims 1 and 3 also stand rejected under U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,331,134 to Noboru Kimura.

3. These separate rejections will be addressed concurrently. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections to the extent that they are pertinent to amended independent claims 1 and 5. Claims 1 and 5 have been amended to recite:

a sintered aluminum nitride (AlN) wafer holder body, the wafer holder body fabricated from AlN powder having an oxygen impurity concentration of 2 weight percent or less and a metal impurity concentration of 2000 parts per million or less.

These amendments are supported by paragraphs [0023] and [0024] of the original specification such that no new matter is entered and no new search should be required.

Emphasizing the high thermal conductivity and superior corrosion resistance of AlN—noted in paragraph [0023] of the present specification as an advantageous substance for the wafer holder—Applicants point specifically to the oxygen and

metal-impurity content, specified in paragraph [0024] and now recited in claim 1, in the raw-material powder. Applicants submit that thus controlling the oxygen and metal-impurity content of the wafer-holder constituting AlN raw-material powder improves, as a distinguishing feature of the present invention, the thermal conductivity the wafer holder as now claimed.

4. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 5, as amended, now distinguish patentably over the prior art of record. In particular, none of the prior art references of record teach the combination of elements recited in either of claims 1 or 5. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections.
5. Claim 1 being allowable, it follows that dependent claims 2 through 4 must also be allowable since these dependent claims carry with them all the elements of independent claim 1 to which they ultimately refer.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawanabe et al in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,572,814 to Shamoulian et al.

6. Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is moot in view of the claim amendments described above in Paragraphs 3 and 4.

In conclusion, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of pending claims 1 through 5, and earnestly solicit favorable action by the Examiner at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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